



A QUARTER CENTURY OF TRANSBOUNDARY WATER COOPERATION

2000–2025



Communiqué of the 8th Meeting of the ORASECOM Forum of the Parties

5 December 2025 | Gaborone, Botswana

The Ministers responsible for water from the Republic of Botswana, the Kingdom of Lesotho, Republic of Namibia, and Republic of South Africa convened in Gaborone, Botswana, for the 8th Ordinary Meeting of the Orange–Senqu River Commission (ORASECOM) Forum of the Parties. The Meeting reviewed progress of the joint management, development, and protection of the shared water resources of the Orange–Senqu River Basin and provided strategic direction for the Commission’s ongoing work.

Strengthening Transboundary Water Cooperation

The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to cooperative governance of the Basin and welcomed significant progress since the last Forum of the parties Meeting held in the city of Tshwane, South Africa in 2023. In this regard, some of the key achievements noted include:

- **Advancement of the Revised ORASECOM Agreement**
Ministers noted progress towards the ratification of the 2018 revised Agreement, which will modernise and strengthen the Commission’s legal and institutional framework.
- **Prioritising Sanitation and Water Quality**
Ministers acknowledged the integration of sanitation into the next *Integrated Water Resources Management & Investment Plan (2026–2035)*, ensuring coordinated action on pollution, water quality, Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), and cross-sectoral issues.
- **Improving Flow Conditions in the Lower Orange–Senqu**
Ministers noted progress toward the Noordoewer/Vioolsdrift Dam Bridging Feasibility Study, with ORASECOM appointed as the Project Executing Agency and procurement of the consultant underway.

Progress on ORASECOM’s Work Programme

The Forum commended the Commission for delivering significant basin-wide initiatives, including:

- **Lesotho–Botswana Water Transfer Project (L-BWTP)**
Progress on this strategic multi-country water security initiative. The Project has completed its pre-feasibility study and the Dam Technical Feasibility Study. Remaining studies to conclude by mid-2027 include: Technical Feasibility of the Water Conveyance System (WCS), Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (for both the dam and WCS) and Financial, Legal, and Institutional assessments.
- **Successful Hosting of the 2025 Investment Conference**
The May 2025 conference in Maseru mobilised high-level political commitment and enhanced engagement with financiers, development partners, and the private sector around climate-resilient investments.



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- **Completion of the UNDP-GEF SAP Implementation Project**
Field projects in all four countries delivered tangible community and ecosystem benefits—groundwater desalination in Botswana, improved water quality monitoring in Lesotho, prosopis clearing and ecosystem restoration in Namibia, and the development of an estuarine management plan in South Africa.
- **Initiation of the ORASECOM Water Fund**
Ministers welcomed progress towards establishing a long-term financing mechanism to support basin restoration, water security, and climate resilience, including submission of a Project Identification Form (PIF) to the Global Environment Facility.
- **Advancing Gender Leadership in Water Diplomacy**
The Forum praised the continued development of the *Women in Water Diplomacy Network* for the Basin and celebrated appointments of Basin representatives to the Network's Global Council.

Financial Sustainability and Resource Mobilisation

Ministers noted the financial status of the Commission and support from International Cooperating Partners, including UNDP-GEF, the African Development Bank, and the German Government. They encouraged continued resource mobilisation and deeper partnerships to sustain basin-wide programmes.

Bilateral and Trilateral Cooperation

The Forum welcomed steady progress under existing cooperation frameworks, including the Permanent Water Commission (Namibia–South Africa), Lesotho Highlands Water Commission, and Botswana–South Africa Joint Permanent Technical Commission, highlighting the value of technical collaboration across the river basin.

Looking Ahead

The Ministers reiterated their shared commitment to safeguarding the Orange–Senqu River Basin as a strategic resource underpinning regional water security, climate resilience, economic development, and ecological sustainability.

The 9th Ordinary Meeting of the Forum of the Parties will be hosted by the Kingdom of Lesotho in 2026.

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